

Why I'm Riddled With Frustration, Part 2 - Romans 7:7-11 – February 12th, 2012

- Please know that, for the benefit of those of you who were not with us last week for part one that this chapter is particularly is forgiving of that.
- What I mean by that is, the way Paul writes this epistle is such that he sort of repeats himself, and in so doing expounds on a doctrinal truth.
- By the time we complete chapter seven, and seamlessly begin chapter eight, which must be taught and studied together, it all comes together.
- This pre-supposes the frustration and condemnation of chapters 6 and 7 have both readied and steadied us for what awaits in chapter eight.
- Be that as it may, the uniqueness of these chapters does present a bit of a challenge in the sense that we must strive to see the bigger picture.
- In other words, only tackling a few verses at a time may serve to limit our ability to see both, where it goes, and more importantly how it all ends.
- The good news is, this doesn't end in frustration, but freedom. However, the danger of chapter seven is that we're not brought to a needed end.
- If the utter exasperation and total frustration of chapter seven is not realized, then we're really not ready for that which chapter eight has to offer.
- So, having said that, I think it's incumbent upon me to give you the back-story so as to hit the ground running as it were, in the verses before us.
- The Holy Spirit deemed it necessary to have the Apostle write, with explicit clarity, why it is that we're all prone to frustration and condemnation.
- The source is, in a word, legalism. If the door of my life is kept open for legalism, the room of my Christianity will be filled with only frustration.
- Frustration and condemnation are roommates under the roof of the law. It's for this reason Paul goes to such length about being under grace.
- There's a magnificent progression in how Paul communicates this, in that he shows us how it is that we need to come to the end of ourselves.
- It's as if we need to be at our wits end in our abusive relationship with the law before we'll realize it no longer has the authority to condemn us.
- This is where the text that's before us comes into play. At the risk of sounding a little dorky, "oh thank heaven for verses seven through eleven."
- I'm hoping you'll understand that exuberant yet silly saying once you see the way Paul, by the Holy Spirit, shows us why we're so frustrated.
- If I'm able to see the why, there's a good chance I'll know the what, and when I know the what, I can then receive the how from the Holy Spirit.
- I'll say the same thing a different way; when I have eyes to see why I'm riddled with frustration and condemnation, so too can I see what to do.
- This explains Paul's explanation of why we are, and his exhortation of what to do about it. He then takes it further and packages it with the how.
- We see our first "why" in verse seven, thank heaven. It becomes the catalyst to kicking legalism out of the house and locking the door behind it.

1. I only focus on my outward behavior (Verse 7)

- (7) What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet."
- v7 Paul asks if the law is sin, then quickly answers; "Certainly not!" He wouldn't have known what the sin of coveting was except through the law.
 - It's as if Paul is saying "don't talk stink about the law. Why? There's nothing wrong with the law. The law is perfect, however, we're not perfect.
 - Well, what then is the purpose of the law? The purpose of the law is not for me to keep it, the purpose of the law is to show me I cannot keep it.
 - Question, why does Paul single out the commandment about covetousness? Why doesn't he just talk about all the commandments collectively?
 - I believe it's that, while all the other commandments deal with the outward, the commandment concerning covetousness deals with the inward.
 - Under the banner of legalism, I can outwardly act like I'm keeping those commandments, but I can't do that inwardly with this commandment.
 - Here's why, the impossibility of outwardly keeping the law, makes me into a hypocrite who as an actor, is behaving to keep up that appearance.
 - The problem is, absent the how factor inwardly, I'll live in frustration as an actor outwardly. Who I am on the inside isn't who I am on the outside.
 - This ought not be! Here's how: If and when the Holy Spirit is convicting me inwardly, then the law cannot be condemning me outwardly. (Rom 8:1)

2. I set myself up to be seized by my sin (Verse 8a)

- (8a) But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire...
- v8a Paul goes onto describe how sin, seizing every opportunity afforded by this commandment, produced in him, every kind of covetous desire.
 - This is interesting for a number of reasons, not the least of which is, that Paul, every so brilliantly and beautifully shows us why it works this way.
 - Namely, why every kind of covetous desire is produced inwardly vis-à-vis seizing the opportunity afforded it by the commandment it prohibits.
 - It works like this, if I'm having difficulty finding a parking spot only to come upon that "No Parking" sign, it produces a desire to break that law.
 - I would have never had the desire to park in that particular spot had it not been for that sign telling me that it was against the law to park there.
 - It's akin to walking by a door bearing the sign; "Do Not Open." I would have never even entertained the idea of opening it were it not for the sign.
 - In fact, I may have never even noticed the door before, had it not been for the law that was now placed upon it. It's produced a desire to break it.
 - The sign isn't sin; I'm in sin. The sign is fine but I am fined when I break the law. Dare I bring into the discussion, speed limit signs? I just did!
 - That speed limit sign, seizing the opportunity afforded by the traffic laws, produced in me the desire to exceed it, and thus I end up breaking it.

3. I try to work harder in order to be better (Verses 8b-11)

- (8b) ...For apart from law, sin is dead. (9) Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. (10) I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. (11) For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.
- v8b-9 He says that apart from the law sin is dead. Once alive apart from the law, when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and he died.
 - v10 He then tells them how it is that he found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life, actually ended up bringing about death.
 - v11 He explains that sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived him, and through that commandment put him to death.
 - Paul says this this way because sin tries to save its own skin and in order to do that it has to spring to life deceiving me and putting me to death.
 - Sin doesn't want to die sin wants me to die. Sin knows that apart from the law it's dead and I'm alive, so it has to come to life to put me to death.
 - The lie of the law is, work harder do better. More laws equal less sins. Nothing could be further from the truth. The law can't make me holy.
 - Lest you think this is going around in circles, let me hasten to say, as we'll see in verse twelve, that the law is holy, but it can't make me holy.
 - This begs the very question it answers by virtue of how it is that we're so prone to think the answer to how one can live a holy life is in legalism.
 - The notion that if I just try harder to be a good person, and develop the seven habits, five steps, or three keys, I can be holy is a lie from hell.